

regular, and the secular clergy. The regular clergy were those living under a rule, as canons regular, monks, and friars. The secular clergy consisted, not only of the higher and lower grades of priests and prelates with cure of souls, but of a vast army of 'clerks,' engaged in every manner of employment. The secular clergy were under the jurisdiction of the Bishops; while many of the regulars were not. The friars were entirely exempt from all authority save the Pope's, and were a continual thorn in the side of the secular clergy. The monks, also, were many of them free from the visitation of the Bishops, and all of them had their own organisation and officers independent of the rest of the Church. Like the friars, they looked to Home for support, and the Pope was politic enough to curtail the episcopal power of visitation not a little; in return the Papacy could safely rely on the support of the regular clergy. The Bishops were, in fact, responsible chiefly for the seculars, but over their power was nearly absolute, and their influence great, for good or for evil.

It was the characteristic of these Bishops that they were men of the world. With the exception of Brunton of Rochester, an enthusiast who abused his colleagues so fiercely that we must suppose he differed from most of them, the bench was composed of shrewd men of business, taking the institutions of Church and State as they found them, and carrying on the affairs of both on the traditional lines. Wyke, Tyn, Gourtenay, Spencer and Sudbury were four very different men, but this description applies to them all. The other Bishops are only names to us; but we know the secular offices which they held, and we have the opinion of contemporaries that worldliness was their characteristic, and avarice

responsible persons, but it is impossible to get much of the actual influence of an institution from official documents*, for they only represent what the institution is meant to be and not what it is. As to the satirists. Mark Pattison has said a wise word about this kind of historical evidence. "Satire to be popular must exaggerate, but it must be an exaggeration of known and recognised facts." p. 104. [Essays, vol. II. (Nettleship's edition), * Popular View of the Clergy. Mark Pattison has also made a perfectly just remark about the satirists of this particular period in saying that they were * not indiscriminate in their attacks, but singled out particular points in Church practice and government (p. 105). It is on the consensus of this discriminating opinion, including persons so different as Chaucer, Gower, Langland, Wycliffe, Bishop Brunton and Fitzwalter, that I in part rely.